

ITAL FIGHTS HARD

Progress in Alpine Warfare
Slow and Difficult.

Siege of Gorizia Nearly Successful After Six Months.

AIDING STRICKEN SERBIA

Resources of Italy Unimpaired Since Entrance Into War.

Victor's Troops Push Grim Offensive Against Austria.

(BY ALICE ROBE.)
Rome, Jan. 3.—When the orchestral guns have boomed their last salvo and the big abacus curtain of peace drops on Europe's war-torn stage, doubtless the world will begin to appreciate the role played by King Victor in the greatest tragedy of history.

Act II was well under way before Italy joined the players and King Victor with his tuft of rooster feathers appeared from the wings. He had frequently been mentioned in the lines, and no wonder he had strode upon the stage than he and the veteran actor Franz Josef came to blows.

"Verona will fall before Gorizia," shouted the Austrians.

"Gorizia first," retorted Victor—and the play went on.

It was not until May of last year that Italy declared war on Austria. Immediately the Italian general staff outlined the following plan of campaign: 1. An aggressive, systematic operation on the mountainous northern frontier. Trentino and the Carnic Alps—long fortified by Austria, designed to make an Austrian invasion of Italy easy while standing impregnable against Italian invasion.

2. An offensive on a large scale against the valley of the Po, and the Italian Alps on the east and the Adriatic peninsula to the south.

The final program was this: Destruction of Austrian commerce on the Adriatic and adjacent waters and the bottling up or destruction of the Austrian fleet.

On land today Italy faces the New Year as the only one of the allied powers whose main army is firmly entrenched on the soil of an enemy. On water the Duke of Abruzzi's fleet is supreme. The Austrian main fleet, refused in Pola harbor, refused the Italian challenge that the German fleet, defies the British—in the Kiel canal. Like Germany, Austria is unable to give safe convoy to her own commerce.

With an army of more than 2,250,000 men in uniform; with reserves of 1,750,000 men and 38 yet to be called to the colors; with abundant equipment, especially heavy artillery; backed by a splendid industrial mobilization capable of feeding millions for any length of time; Italy looks to the future with the utmost confidence. This feeling was vividly reflected in the recent utterance of Baron Sonnino, minister for foreign affairs, in the chamber, in which he announced not only Italy's agreement with the allies, but her purpose to extend the campaign across the Adriatic in support of stricken Serbia.

In answer to the challenge, 50,000 Italian troops have already landed in Albania, where pioneers are busy at road-building and other means of transport through the mountainous terrain. Food and clothing by the shipload are being sent by the Italians for the Serbian refugees.

Seven months of fighting along the lines of the general staff's plan of campaign have produced far greater results than the daily communiques have indicated. The Italian offensive has reached the stage where an Italian occupation of the entire Adriatic peninsula, as well as effective thrusts northward and eastward, is believed to be possible early in 1916.

The northern campaign in the Trentino and Carnic regions, has closed with the object attained. After months of the severest and most difficult mountain fighting, the Italian forces on precipitous battlefields, the Alpine troops, Bersaglieri and infantry with heavy artillery, sometimes drawn up on the mountain peaks, have battered their way after long and dusty, stormy and captured hitherto impregnable positions, and consolidated the conquered crags and valleys against a successful counter offensive. The floodgates of invasion for which Austria had been preparing since 1866 and which she has boasted would give her the city of Verona before the end of the year, are now closed against her with double bar and lock.

Weeks of desperate fighting against terrific odds were sometimes required by the Italians to take a single fortress or position in this phase of the campaign.

While this was going on, the second part of the general staff plan was being executed in the Isonzo valley. On June 2 King Victor's armies crossed the Isonzo. On June 9, Montefalco fell to General Cadorna. Two days later Gradisca had succumbed and the Austrians retreated to Gorizia. On July 7, the bridgehead at Gorizia was reached by the Italians, where for five months the ebb and flow of battle had soaked the soil with Italian and Austrian blood. A general advance over the entire front from Tolmino to Montefalco July 22 still found Cadorna's troops before Gorizia locked in the deadly struggle.

Gorizia's loss would mean a severe blow to Austria and all means are employed to defend it. Reinforcements were brought from the east, and it was only the timely arrival of German regiments on one occasion that saved the town from a disastrous rout in the sector north of Pavia.

During the latter days of November, the Austrian resistance at Gorizia began to weaken. December 1 found the city invested from three sides, the surrounding fortresses pounded to fragments by the Austrian artillery and the town defended by only a single line of trenches. Italian shells of heavy caliber were plunging the streets.

The fall of Gorizia would give General Cadorna's troops access to all the roads leading toward Villach to the north, Laibach to the east, and Trieste to the south. The investment of Trieste would mean an expeditionary force of the Adriatic peninsula, including Pola, refuge of the Austrian fleet.

According to the latest estimates the total Austrian casualties in Italy, of which 60,000 are killed, Austrian prisoners in Italy number 50,000. The Italian losses, too, have been heavy, but probably less than the Austrians.

BRINGING UP FATHER

AH! MAGGIE—ME DARLIN'—YOU'RE A FINE GIRL TO WAIT ON ME THIS WAY— I DON'T LIKE TO KEEP YOU IN THE HOUSE LIKE THIS—

I HAVE A LOT OF SHOPPING TO DO BUT I WOULDN'T THINK OF LEAVING YOU WHILE YOU'RE SICK!

WHY DON'T YOU GET A NURSE FOR ME—THEN YOU COULD TAKE IT EASY—

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WHAT? ARE YOU THE NURSE?

YES—MADAME!

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FUMCHMANUS

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There is an enormous export demand for war material, accompanied by a great lack of maritime bottoms to transport it—this results in the damming up of the stream of commerce at the Atlantic ports, and naturally sets it back into the country. Over a large portion of this nation there is no shortage of cars that is noticeable, and the trouble is almost entirely confined to the Atlantic seaboard.

I am glad that President Wilson has at last taken official notice of the conditions. Everybody who knows anything of the subject has long recognized that the railroads cannot serve the country unless they are able to handle the interstate commerce commission, and intelligently obey the orders of all which orders are in many cases in direct conflict, and in many other cases tend to nullification. Everybody also realizes that the interstate commerce commission, which ought to be supreme in all matters, both local and national, is already terribly overworked.

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